

## STAKEHOLDERS ROUNDTABLE TRADE UNIONS AND WORKERS

### Key words

2030 Agenda; Building; City Workers; Decent Work; Economic Empowerment; Informal Workers; Occupational Health and Safety; Migrant Workers; New Urban Agenda; Precarious Workers; Public Services; Social Inclusion; Social and Labour Clauses; Sustainable Development Goals; Sustainable Employment Creation; Trade Unions; Women Workers; Worker's Rights; Young Workers;

### Objectives of the session

The objectives of this Stakeholders Roundtable are:

- To discuss challenges facing cities, particularly in developing countries, in promoting local economic development, creation of jobs and livelihood opportunities for youth, women and vulnerable groups in urban settings;
- To share knowledge and experiences, from both developing and developed countries, on effective mechanisms and strategies that local and national authorities in developing countries can use to realize decent work, employment creation for all;
- To discuss strategies that can be used for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in areas of inclusive socio-economic development, decent work and quality employment creation for all, including women and youth in cities.

### Introduction of the topic

Although they represent the large majority of city dwellers and urban communities, city workers – whether formal or informal, young, women, elderly or migrant – city workers and their trade unions are often invisible and underpaid, working and living in precarious conditions. Yet their work is critical in determining whether cities become attractive harbours of opportunity, engines of economic development and social inclusion, or socially explosive hubs of inequality, poverty and violence.

It is city workers who build, operate, bring cities to life, and relentlessly protect them on a daily basis, providing the essential services urban and local communities need at all times. To do so, city workers need adequate resources, staffing levels, appropriate health and equipment and

training to perform their jobs safely. Instead, the conditions of city workers worldwide leave much to be desired.

Precarious employment, the violation of basic workers' and trade unions' rights, inadequate wages, lack of training and safety equipment, as well as the privatization of essential public services, austerity measures and tax avoidance dramatically undermine our cities' inclusiveness and sustainability. Many city workers operate under extremely difficult conditions: public emergency, building, health and utility workers – among others - often lose their lives or get permanently impaired on the job because of such conditions.

It is crucial to raise awareness within urban communities' stakeholders, mayors, local and central government officials and elected representatives, as well as within UN-Habitat that workers and trade union rights are not only a non-negotiable human right entitlement of all workers, but also a necessary precondition to achieve the New Urban Agenda's transformative commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals. Workers and their trade unions are key institutional actors in shaping social, economic and urban policy on an equal footing with social partners local authorities and business, as per the International Labour Organization's tripartite approach.

## Guiding Questions

Q1: How are trade unions and workers collaborating with mayors and other partners to implement the transformative commitments of the New Urban Agenda to make cities and local communities more equitable and inclusive?

Q2: What are some concrete examples of where protecting and strengthening workers' rights contributed to more effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda?

Q3: What is the role and challenges of public emergency service workers in dealing with the consequences of climate change in cities and how are the ILO Guidelines on Decent Work in Public Emergency Services relevant to this issue?

Q4: What is the role of accessible universal, gender and youth-responsive public services in achieving urban gender equality?

Q5: How can decent housing be ensured for construction workers who are the builders of the cities and yet often live in the peripheries of the urban centers?

Q6: How can decent work be ensured in municipal waste management services and the urban circular economy? What are the challenges for municipal and informal waste workers?